

people; two drinks per plane ride; leaving,  
arriving; subtractdivideplying 1750 lira into  
four dollars and a quarter; pubs closing at 11,  
bars opening at 11; Berlitz, warm Schlitz;  
cabs, cold, culture; luggage, tickets, antiquities;  
folk songs, folks; French, Germans, Italians,  
Nebraskans; flying, driving, packing, oohing,  
ahing, listening, smiling, waving; cameras,  
The Holyland, dysentery, people.

There. That should hold me for a while.  
Just take it easy, sit back and bask in  
the glow of how staying home narrows one.

Eden

Watching the Dogers bobble and bangle around  
on astroturf gave me hope one dream might  
yet come true: a place in the country for this  
city boy who never had a sense of humus.  
All I've waited for is grass that doesn't grow  
and ground that needs no toiling. I was taught  
to puff on weeds, not pull them.

It'll probably be a few years yet before  
science replaces the rest of nature --  
acrylic redwoods, I understand, are still a problem,  
but half a god's little acre should be no challenge.

From a swatch book should I select, oh,  
orange grass, black and white privet hedges  
where a dalmatian could take a leak invisibly,  
a paisley vine for the chimney?

This above all: in the garage there will  
be no clipper or snipper, and "mower"  
will only be a lousy pun -- dolly in now for a closeup  
of the owner bragging about his synthetic thumb.

But I won't go in for the Gloria Swanson  
slant line Liberace look: polka dot poplars  
or crazy quilt chrysanthemums -- no sir --  
I want my nest to look from the road  
as real as Wisconsin with lots of green  
and willows weeping sterling spanish moss --  
but come up close and you'll see  
it's no different than the rest of the world.

-- Charles Stetler

Long Beach, CA